

1 ROBERT W. FERGUSON  
*Attorney General*

2 RENE D. TOMISSER, WSBA #17509  
3 *Senior Counsel*  
4 JEFFREY T. SPRUNG, WSBA #23607  
5 ZACHARY P. JONES, WSBA #44557  
6 JOSHUA WEISSMAN, WSBA #42648  
7 PAUL M. CRISALLI, WSBA #40681  
8 NATHAN K. BAYS, WSBA #43025  
9 BRYAN M.S. OVENS, WSBA #32901\*  
10 *\*Admission pending*

11 *Assistant Attorneys General*  
12 8127 W. Klamath Court, Suite A  
13 Kennewick, WA 99336  
14 (509) 734-7285

15 *[Additional counsel on signature page]*

16 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
17 **EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON**  
18 **AT SPOKANE**

19 STATE OF WASHINGTON, et al.,

20 Plaintiffs,

21 v.

22 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT  
OF HOMELAND SECURITY, et al.,

Defendants.

NO. 4:19-cv-05210-RMP

PLAINTIFF STATES' MOTION  
FOR § 705 STAY PENDING  
JUDICIAL REVIEW OR FOR  
PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

NOTED FOR: OCTOBER 3, 2019  
With Oral Argument at 10:00 a.m.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On August 14, 2019, Defendants (collectively, DHS) issued a Final Rule that will cause hundreds of thousands of families in the Plaintiff States, and millions of eligible children and adults nationwide, to disenroll from federal and state health care, nutrition, and housing benefits programs. This, in turn, will result in State residents losing hundreds of millions of dollars in health care services, decreased vaccinations and increased transmission of communicable diseases, and denied access for people with disabilities to services only available through Medicaid. It will increase hunger, malnutrition, and homelessness among children, all associated with deficits in cognitive development, chronic asthma, substance abuse, depression, and behavioral challenges. As demonstrated by the 51 declarations submitted with this motion, DHS's Rule will undermine the mission of dozens of state programs and impose millions of dollars in costs to the Plaintiff States to address the resulting public health problems, educational burdens, and homelessness.

The Plaintiff States move to stay the Rule pending judicial review under the Administrative Procedure Act, or alternatively for a preliminary injunction prohibiting DHS from implementing the Rule, which is scheduled to take effect on October 15, 2019. Through the Rule, the Administration attempts to remake the "public charge" doctrine, a rarely used statutory ground for exclusion of immigrants, into—in its own words—a "transformative" tool to reshape

1 American immigration policy. The Plaintiff States are likely to succeed on the  
2 merits of their claims for a host of reasons:

3 First, DHS interprets the term “public charge” in a manner contrary to  
4 Congress’s intent, as evidenced by statutory text, history, and context.

5 Second, DHS brazenly adopts a legal standard that Congress twice  
6 expressly rejected, “coopt[ing] Congress’s power to legislate” through executive  
7 action. *City & County of San Francisco v. Trump*, 897 F.3d 1225, 1234 (9th Cir.  
8 2018).

9 Third, the Rule separately violates four statutes: (1) the Immigration and  
10 Nationality Act of 1952, (2) the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant  
11 Responsibility Act of 1996, (3) the Personal Responsibility and Work  
12 Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and (4) the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

13 Fourth, the Rule is arbitrary and capricious because DHS failed to  
14 meaningfully address evidence of the harm the Rule inflicts on vulnerable people,  
15 especially children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities, and DHS  
16 ignored its own evidence that the factors it prescribed for the public charge  
17 analysis are arbitrary, ill-defined, and give unreasonable discretion to  
18 immigration officials.

19 DHS’s unlawful efforts to refashion American immigration policy through  
20 regulation should not take effect while the Plaintiff States’ legal challenge is  
21 pending.



## II. BACKGROUND

### A. Overview of Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) requires certain immigrants to prove that they are “not inadmissible.” 8 U.S.C. § 1361; 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a). A noncitizen who is “likely at any time to become a public charge” is inadmissible. 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(4).<sup>1</sup> This “public charge exclusion” is enforced abroad by consular officers (who process visa applications) and domestically by Defendant USCIS. It applies to:

- noncitizens seeking to become lawful permanent residents;
- immigrants entering the United States on a visa;<sup>2</sup>
- noncitizens applying to “adjust” status to lawful permanent residency (*i.e.*, apply for a green card); and
- permanent residents “seeking admission” (including, among other circumstances, when a permanent resident returns to the United States after a trip of more than 180 days).

8 U.S.C. §§ 1101(a)(13)(c), 1182(a), 1225(a), 1255(a), 1361.

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<sup>1</sup> Certain groups of noncitizens, such as asylum seekers and refugees, are exempt from the public charge ground. *See* 8 U.S.C. §§ 1157(c)(3), 1158(b)(2), 1159(c).

<sup>2</sup> Visa holders undergo an inadmissibility determination by DHS at ports of entry every time they enter and re-enter the United States. 8 U.S.C. § 1185(d).

**B. History of the Public Charge Exclusion**

From colonial “poor laws” through modern times, the term “public charge” has had a clear and established meaning: a person unable to care for himself or herself and primarily dependent on the state for support. *See* Minor Myers III, *A Redistributive Role for Local Government*, 36 Urb. Law. 753, 773 (2004) (colonial poor laws permitted towns to expel transient beggars, vagrants, and paupers as “public charges”); Gerald L. Neuman, *The Lost Century of American Immigration Law (1776-1875)*, 93 Colum. L. Rev. 1833, 1846 (1993); Hidetaki Hirota, *Expelling the Poor: Atlantic Seaboard States and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of American Immigration Policy* (2017) (mass European migration in the early 19th century brought “large numbers of exceptionally impoverished and destitute people” who were described, in common parlance and law, as “public charges,” “paupers,” or both); Immigration Act of 1882, 47th Cong., ch. 376, 22 Stat. 214 (1882) (borrowing from state immigration laws, to prohibit the landing in the United States of “any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any other person unable to take care of himself . . . without becoming a public charge”); 26 Stat. 1084, 1084 (1891) (adding “paupers” to the list so that the provision precluded admission of “idiots, insane persons, paupers or persons likely to become a public charge”).

When Congress reorganized immigration law into the present statutory framework, the INA retained the long-established exclusions of “paupers” and those “likely at any time to become a public charge,” along with numerous other

1 grounds of inadmissibility—including for those with “a mental defect,” “physical  
2 defect,” disease,” or “disability . . . of such a nature that it may affect the ability  
3 of the alien to earn a living.” Immigration and Nationality (McCarran-Walter)  
4 Act of 1952, Pub. L. No. 414, § 212(a), 66 Stat. 163, 182 (codified as amended  
5 at 8 U.S.C. § 1101, *et seq.*).<sup>3</sup>

### 6 **C. DHS’s Public Charge Rule**

7 On August 12, 2019, DHS issued a Final Rule designed to “transform”<sup>4</sup>  
8 who may immigrate to the United States, by expanding the previously rarely used  
9 “public charge” exclusion.<sup>5</sup> Final Rule, *Inadmissibility on Public Charge*

10 \_\_\_\_\_  
11 <sup>3</sup> The Immigration Act of 1990 eliminated all of the above grounds of  
12 inadmissibility, with the exception of the public charge exclusion. Pub. L. No.  
13 101-649, § 601(a)(4), 104 Stat. 4978, 5072 (codified as amended at 8 U.S.C.  
14 § 1182).

15 <sup>4</sup> See Eileen Sullivan & Michael D. Shear, *Trump Sees an Obstacle to*  
16 *Getting His Way on Immigration: His Own Officials*, N.Y. Times (Apr. 14, 2019),  
17 [https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/14/us/politics/trump-immigration-stephen-](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/14/us/politics/trump-immigration-stephen-miller.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage)  
18 [miller.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/14/us/politics/trump-immigration-stephen-miller.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage).

19 <sup>5</sup> Between 2000 and 2016, less than 0.2% of the more than 17 million  
20 immigrants admitted as lawful permanent residents were denied visas on public  
21 charge grounds. See Report of the Visa Office, 2000–2018,  
22 <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-statistics.html>.

1 *Grounds*, 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,292 (August 14, 2019) (to be codified at 8 C.F.R.  
 2 pts. 103, 212–14, 245, 248) (the Rule).<sup>6</sup> The Rule becomes effective October 15,  
 3 2019. 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,292.

4 The Rule unmoors the public charge definition from its historic anchor in  
 5 primary dependence on the government for subsistence, and it significantly  
 6 expands the types of benefits considered in the public charge determination and  
 7 the amount of wealth an immigrant needs to remain in the country. In public  
 8 comments, many states (including the Plaintiff States) explained the devastating  
 9 impacts the proposed rule would have on the health care costs and well-being of  
 10 families of legal immigrants in their states. *See, e.g.*, Bays Decl.<sup>7</sup> Exs. H, I.

#### 11 **1. New definition of “public charge”**

12 Contrary to the established meaning of “public charge” and Congressional  
 13 intent, the Rule redefines the term as “an alien who receives one or more public  
 14 benefits . . . for more than 12 months in the aggregate within any 36-month  
 15 period.” 8 C.F.R. § 212.21(a). Under the 12-month threshold, receipt of two  
 16

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17  
 18 <sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent C.F.R. citations are to provisions  
 19 of the Rule to be codified and effective October 15, 2019.

20 <sup>7</sup> Plaintiff States refer throughout to declarations submitted with this  
 21 Motion by the last name of the declarant, followed by the pertinent reference to  
 22 the paragraph or exhibit number of that declaration.

benefits in a given month counts as two months, three benefits as three months, and so forth—regardless of the amounts received. 8 C.F.R. § 212.21(a).

## 2. Consideration of non-cash benefits

The Rule dismisses the longstanding interpretation of the benefits that trigger a public charge determination and casts a vastly wider net to include common, non-cash federal benefits.<sup>8</sup> A “public benefit” includes: “(1) [a]ny Federal state, local or tribal cash assistance for income maintenance,” including SSI, TANF, or state “General Assistance”; (2) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); (3) Section 8 housing assistance vouchers; (4) Section 8 project-based rental assistance; (5) Medicaid (with exceptions for benefits or services for emergency medical conditions, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, that are school-based, to immigrants who are under 21 years of age or a woman during pregnancy); and (6) public housing under Section 9 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. 8 C.F.R. § 212.21(b).

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<sup>8</sup> Between 2009 and 2012, approximately 52.2 million people in the United States (or 21.3% of the general population) participated in one or more major public assistance programs in a given month—including the programs swept up in the Rule—of whom more than two-thirds participated for at least 12 months. See Shelley K. Irving & Tracy A. Loveless, *Dynamics of Economic Well-Being*, U.S. Census Bureau at 2–4 (May 2015).

1                   **3. “Heavily weighted factors” and other wealth-related criteria**

2                   The Rule creates new heavily weighted factors in determining whether a  
3 noncitizen is a public charge, placing heavily negative weight on poverty. The  
4 Rule establishes four factors having heavily negative weight:

- 5                   1. the immigrant is not a full-time student and is authorized to work,  
6 but is unable to demonstrate current or recent employment, or no  
7 reasonable prospect of future employment;  
8                   2. the immigrant has received or has been certified or approved to  
9 receive one or more public benefits for more than 12 months in the  
10 aggregate within any 36-month period;  
11                   3. (A) the immigrant has been diagnosed with a medical condition that  
12 likely will require extensive medical treatment or will interfere with  
13 his or her ability to attend work or school; and (B) he or she is  
14 uninsured and has no prospect of obtaining private health insurance  
15 nor the financial resources to pay for reasonably foreseeable medical  
16 costs;  
17                   4. the immigrant has been previously found to be inadmissible or  
18 deportable on public charge grounds.

19                   8 C.F.R. § 212.22(c)(1)(i)–(iv).

20                   Other wealth-related criteria the Rule introduces include whether the  
21 immigrant (1) is under the age of 18 or over the minimum early retirement age  
22 for social security; (2) has a medical condition that will require extensive  
treatment or interfere with the ability to attend school or work; (3) has an annual  
household gross income under 125% of the Federal poverty guidelines (FPG);  
(4) has a household size that makes the immigrant likely to become a public  
charge at any time in the future; (5) lacks significant assets, like savings accounts,

1 stocks, bonds, or real estate; (6) lacks sufficient assets and resources to cover  
 2 reasonably foreseeable medical costs; (7) has any financial liabilities; (8) has  
 3 applied for, been certified to receive, or received public benefits after October  
 4 15, 2019; (9) has applied for or has received a USCIS fee waiver for an  
 5 immigration benefit request; (10) has a lower credit history and credit score;  
 6 (11) lacks private health insurance or other resources to cover reasonably  
 7 foreseeable medical costs; (12) lacks a high school diploma (or equivalent) or a  
 8 higher education degree; or (13) is not proficient in English. 8 C.F.R. § 212.22(b).

9 Heavily weighted positive factors also evaluate wealth and include  
 10 whether (1) the immigrant's household income, assets, or resources are at least  
 11 250% of the FPG; (2) the immigrant legally works with an annual income at least  
 12 250% of the FPG; and (3) the immigrant has private health insurance, except for  
 13 any health insurance for which there are tax credits under the Affordable Care  
 14 Act. 8 C.F.R. § 212.22(c)(2)(i)-(iii).

#### 15 **4. Changes in bond requirements**

16 If DHS determines a noncitizen likely to become a public charge, it  
 17 nevertheless may allow the person to obtain a visa by submitting a public charge  
 18 bond. 8 U.S.C. § 1183. The Rule increases the bond amount more than eight-fold,  
 19 to \$8,100. 8 C.F.R. § 213.1(c)(2). The Rule also severely limits the use of bonds,  
 20 which "generally will not" be allowed if an immigrant "has one or more heavily  
 21 weighted negative factors." 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,451.

**5. Failure to address costs to states**

Despite the Rule’s impact on states’ health care plans, housing programs, and supplemental nutrition programs, DHS submitted no federalism summary impact statement and asserted that the Rule “does not have substantial effects on the States.” 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,481; *see also id.* at 41,469–70 (dismissing the costs to state and local government as “unclear” and “indirect”).

**D. The Plaintiff States Will Suffer Immediate and Irreparable Harm**

**1. The Rule will chill State residents from participating in state and federal benefit programs**

If the Rule goes into effect, millions of legally present noncitizens nationwide could be subject to public charge determinations. Bays Decl. Ex. A; 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,417 (admitting that more working immigrants with incomes below the 125% threshold will be determined a public charge); *see also* Bays Decl. Ex. B (in 2017, approximately 380,000 individuals adjusted their immigration status in a manner that likely would have subjected them to a public charge determination under the Rule). Currently, over 6.3 million noncitizens nationwide accept public benefits as defined by the Rule making them subject to a public charge determination, including 233,000 individuals in Illinois, 192,000 individuals in Massachusetts, 188,000 individuals in New Jersey, 92,000 individuals in Maryland, 78,000 individuals in Michigan, and 75,000 individuals in Washington. Bays Decl. Ex. G.



1 DHS concedes that the Rule will have a chilling effect on immigrants’  
 2 willingness to seek public benefits for which they are entitled. 84 Fed. Reg. at  
 3 41,312. Immigrants fearing deportation will disenroll from state and federal  
 4 public benefit programs to avoid the potential classification as a public charge.  
 5 *See* 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,463 (estimating a 2.5% disenrollment rate from programs  
 6 included in the new public charge test); *id.* at 51,266–69 (agreeing that the Rule  
 7 will cause hundreds of thousands of eligible individuals who are members of  
 8 households with foreign-born noncitizens to disenroll from or forego enrollment  
 9 in benefits for which they eligible).

10 In reality, the number of noncitizens who will be chilled from using state  
 11 or federal public benefits is much higher than DHS’s estimates and is expected  
 12 to range between 15% and 35% among noncitizens. Bays Decl. Exs. C, D, E  
 13 (reflecting up to 60% disenrollment, even for noncitizens who were exempted  
 14 from restrictions on access to those benefits); Wong Decl. ¶¶ 27–29, 32–34  
 15 (studies in related areas of immigration show that, when threatened with  
 16 deportation, statistically significant numbers of immigrants will disenroll or not  
 17 participate in benefit programs related to health, food, and housing). Nationwide,  
 18 there are over 10.3 million noncitizens in families receiving at least one cash or  
 19 noncash benefit whom the Rule may cause to disenroll in the applicable program,  
 20 including 424,000 individuals in Illinois, 335,000 individuals in New Jersey,  
 21 255,000 individuals in Massachusetts, 245,000 individuals in Washington,  
 22

1 182,000 individuals in Maryland, 148,000 individuals in Virginia, 116,000  
 2 individuals in Michigan, and 114,000 individuals in Nevada. Bays Decl. Ex. G.

3 **2. Anticipated disenrollment will cause concrete irreparable**  
 4 **harm to the Plaintiff States**

5 Nearly all of the benefits programs identified in the Rule are administered  
 6 by the Plaintiff States, who provide additional funding to many of these  
 7 programs. *See, e.g.*, Linke Decl. ¶ 8; Sharfstein Decl. ¶ 10; Emerson Decl. ¶ 10.  
 8 The Plaintiff States also have adopted their own programs to provide additional  
 9 health care, nutrition, and housing benefits. The Rule causes three types of  
 10 irreparable injury to the Plaintiff States in connection with these expenditures:  
 11 (1) harm to missions of state benefits programs; (2) harm to the health and  
 12 well-being of state residents; and (3) financial harm to the Plaintiff States.

13 **a. Health care**

14 The Plaintiff States combine billions of dollars of federal funds from  
 15 Medicaid with billions of dollars of state funds to administer health care programs  
 16 for millions of people in their states. Linke Decl. ¶ 8; Sharfstein Decl. ¶ 10;  
 17 Emerson Decl. ¶ 10; Neira Decl. ¶ 7. The predicted disenrollment from Medicaid  
 18 and other state health care programs will undermine the purpose of these  
 19 programs and frustrate the will of the Plaintiff States' legislatures that enacted  
 20 them. Linke Decl. ¶¶ 22–25; Sharfstein Decl. ¶¶ 14–16; Betts Decl. ¶ 14; Ezike  
 21 Decl. ¶ 14; MacEwan Decl. ¶ 7; Persichilli Decl. ¶ 11.  
 22

1           The Plaintiff States expect millions of people receiving Medicaid coverage  
 2   to disenroll because of the Rule. Linke Decl. ¶¶ 17–18; Boyle Decl. ¶ 29;  
 3   Kelly Decl. ¶ 15; Eagleson Decl. ¶ 10; Whitley Decl. ¶ 12; *see* Bays Decl. Ex. C.  
 4   Millions of families will also be impacted where a member of the household falls  
 5   under the policy. Linke Decl. ¶ 18; Kelly Decl. ¶ 15; Curtatone & Skipper Decl.  
 6   ¶ 12; Chavez Decl. ¶ 11; Winders Decl. ¶ 12; *see* Bays Decl. Ex. C. Nationwide,  
 7   over 9.5 million noncitizens are in in families receiving Medicaid or CHIP  
 8   benefits. Bays Decl. Ex. G. The effects will be particularly harsh on the Plaintiff  
 9   States’ programs for women, infants, and children, for which participation rates  
 10   have already decreased since the Rule was first made public. Polk Decl. ¶ 19;  
 11   Sharfstein Decl. ¶ 16; Hanulcik Decl. ¶¶ 7, 11–20; Bohanan Decl. ¶¶ 13, 19, 22;  
 12   Kelly, Decl. ¶ 13; Zimmerman Decl. ¶ 13; Neira Decl. ¶ 9. The result will be an  
 13   annual reduction in medical and behavioral care received by residents of the  
 14   Plaintiff States. Pryor Decl. ¶ 9; Sharfstein Decl., ¶ 15; Boyle Decl. ¶ 30;  
 15   MacEwan Decl. ¶¶ 10–13; Berge Decl. ¶¶ 14–17; Groff Decl. ¶¶ 16–17; Clark  
 16   Decl. ¶¶ 8–9; Batayola Decl. ¶ 23; Basta Decl. ¶ 8; Twite Decl. ¶¶ 11–12. The  
 17   financial value of foregone health care currently received by residents of the  
 18   Plaintiff States is projected in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Bays Decl.  
 19   Ex. I at 2. The loss of medical care and health care insurance will seriously impact  
 20   the health and well-being of residents of the Plaintiff States. Sharfstein Decl.  
 21   ¶ 23; Hanulcik Decl. ¶ 19; Batayola Decl. ¶ 14; Hotrum-Lopez Decl. ¶ 6 at 8.  
 22

1 It will deter eligible individuals from accessing routine preventative medical care  
 2 like vaccinations. Polk Decl. ¶ 13; Sharfstein Decl. ¶¶ 17–18; Kelly Decl. ¶ 17;  
 3 Persichilli Decl. ¶¶ 20–22.

4 As DHS admits, Plaintiff States will suffer higher and more frequent  
 5 emergency services and uncompensated care costs. 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,384;  
 6 Sharfstein Decl. ¶ 19; Persichilli Decl. ¶¶ 7–11. Not only will individuals’ health  
 7 suffer, but treatment will be significantly more expensive than if people received  
 8 care before emergencies materialized; these costs will be borne by the Plaintiff  
 9 States and private institutions located in the Plaintiff States. Hou Decl. ¶ 22;  
 10 Sharfstein Decl. ¶¶ 19–22; Fehrenbach Decl. ¶ 36; Emerson Decl. ¶ 16. The Rule  
 11 thus shifts the costs to the States to pay for the public health problems it creates.

#### 12 **b. Food assistance**

13 The Plaintiff States and local governments manage and administer food  
 14 assistance programs using federal funds that will be undermined by the Rule.  
 15 Peterson Decl. ¶¶ 3, 4, 7, 8; Storen Decl. ¶ 5. While the Rule considers only  
 16 SNAP-related benefits as “public benefits” under the public charge test, the broad  
 17 chilling effect will harm state-only food assistance programs, too. Predicted  
 18 disenrollment of tens of thousands of eligible residents from the state  
 19 supplemental nutrition programs and SNAP benefits will undermine the purpose  
 20 of these programs and frustrate the will of the legislatures of the Plaintiff States  
 21 that enacted these programs. Sharfstein Decl. ¶ 23; Hou Decl. ¶ 27;

22

1 Perry Decl. ¶ 17; Peterson Decl. ¶¶ 10, 15; Neira Decl. ¶ 12. The impacts will  
 2 lead to more vulnerable people experiencing food insecurity and severe public  
 3 health concerns. Storen Decl. ¶ 9; Fehrenbach Decl. ¶ 33; Curtatone & Skipper  
 4 Decl. ¶¶ 12–13; Neira Decl. ¶ 18; Sternberg Decl. ¶ 6. The Rule thus not only  
 5 undermines the Plaintiff States’ interest in healthy, stable, and productive  
 6 residents, but also contradicts the purported goal of the Rule itself to “better  
 7 ensure” that immigrants “are self-sufficient, i.e., do not depend on public  
 8 resources to meet their needs.” 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,295.

9 The chilling and disenrollment will particularly hurt children, who as a  
 10 result of malnutrition and hunger are more likely to suffer deficits in cognitive  
 11 development, behavioral problems, and poor health. Polk Decl. ¶ 19; Medrano  
 12 Decl. ¶ 13; Oliver Decl. ¶ 22; Bayatola Decl. ¶¶ 13–14; Hawkins Decl. ¶ 34.  
 13 Children will have more difficulty in school and require greater resources from  
 14 the Plaintiff States’ educational systems. Polk Decl. ¶ 22; Bohanan Decl. ¶14;  
 15 Tahiliani Decl. ¶ 7. The Plaintiff States will bear the brunt of higher health care  
 16 and other costs resulting from the unnecessary malnutrition.

17 The Rule will reduce combined food and cash assistance to families by  
 18 tens of millions of dollars. *E.g.*, Hou Decl. ¶ 21. With reduced assistance, grocers  
 19 will see lower sales, and farmers may see lower prices with decreased demand.  
 20 Hanulcik Decl. ¶ 13. The Plaintiff States will also bear the public health costs as  
 21 more individuals suffer from malnutrition and hunger, and ultimately, a less  
 22

1 productive workforce. Hou Decl. ¶ 23; Peterson Decl. ¶ 13; Hundley Decl. ¶ 15;  
 2 Fitzgerald Decl. ¶ 16.

3 **c. Housing assistance**

4 The Rule will undermine the efficacy of housing assistance programs. The  
 5 Rule will undercut the Plaintiff States’ programs aimed at housing assistance and  
 6 homelessness prevention. Ohle Decl. ¶¶ 8, 11; Rubin Decl. ¶¶ 9, 15–19;  
 7 Curtatone & Skipper Decl. ¶ 10; Baumtrog Decl. ¶¶ 5, 7–8; RI-Doe Decl. ¶¶ 19–  
 8 21; Carey Decl. ¶ 11; Johnston Decl. ¶ 7; Grossman Decl. ¶ 9; Fitzgerald Decl.  
 9 ¶ 10; Persichilli Decl. ¶ 30. This will harm the Plaintiff States’ abilities to fight  
 10 homelessness.

11 The Rule will lead to increased homeless individuals and families in the  
 12 Plaintiff States, and poorer health, educational, and other outcomes for vulnerable  
 13 children residing in the Plaintiff States and who, because of their or a family  
 14 member’s immigration status, will be deprived of emergency shelter or  
 15 placement in permanent housing. Fitzgerald Decl. ¶ 12; Ohle Decl. ¶ 14;  
 16 Baumtrog Decl. ¶ 12; Carey Decl. ¶ 12; Johnston Decl. ¶¶ 11, 14; Grossman Decl.  
 17 ¶¶ 15–16; Rubin Decl. ¶¶ 11, 25, 30. In the first few years after moving to the  
 18 United States, many immigrants benefit from temporary assistance to adjust to  
 19 rental housing markets. *See* Bays Decl., Ex. S at 20–22 (noting that the Rule  
 20 “ignores the fact that public programs are often used as work supports which  
 21 empower future self-sufficiency”); Grossman Decl. ¶¶ 9, 11–12. Without these  
 22

1 temporary benefits, immigrant workers employed in low wage fields will be  
 2 unable to afford current market-based rents. Rubin Decl. ¶¶ 28, 31; Baumtrog  
 3 Decl. ¶ 12; Carey Decl. ¶ 12; Grossman Decl. ¶¶ 9–10, 16. For instance, demand  
 4 for long term services and support workers, in which the labor force includes a  
 5 disproportionate number of immigrants, is expected to grow because of an aging  
 6 population. Moss Decl. ¶¶ 9–16. Children who have lost their homes will suffer  
 7 worse educational outcomes and access fewer and less profitable work  
 8 opportunities. Bourque Decl. ¶ 7; Curtatone & Skipper Decl. ¶ 15; Korte Decl.  
 9 ¶ 23; Rubin Decl. ¶¶ 37–38.

10 This homelessness and housing insecurity will irreparably harm the  
 11 families, children, and the Plaintiff States, which will ultimately bear  
 12 responsibility for the increased costs and consequences of the Rule. Ohle Decl.  
 13 ¶ 13; Bourque Decl. ¶¶ 8–9; Curtatone & Skipper Decl. ¶ 16; Baumtrog Decl.  
 14 ¶¶ 13–14; RI-Doe Decl. ¶ 43; Carey Decl. ¶ 13; Johnston Decl. ¶¶ 13–15; Rubin  
 15 Decl. ¶¶ 35–36. The Plaintiff States will bear the economic costs of the resulting  
 16 homelessness of families, including public health and safety costs. Bourque Decl.  
 17 ¶ 8; Curtatone & Skipper Decl. ¶¶ 15–16; Baumtrog Decl. ¶¶ 13–15; Johnston  
 18 Decl. ¶¶ 13–15; Rubin Decl. ¶¶ 12, 42–48; Fitzgerald Decl. ¶ 20.

### III. ARGUMENT

#### A. Legal Standards

##### 1. Administrative Procedure Act § 705 stay standards

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) authorizes this Court to stay the effective date of the Rule pending judicial review. 5 U.S.C. § 705 (“On such conditions as may be required and to the extent necessary to prevent irreparable injury, the reviewing court . . . may issue all necessary and appropriate process to postpone the effective date of an agency action or to preserve status or rights pending conclusion of the review proceedings.”); *see also Texas v. EPA*, 829 F.3d 405, 424, 435 (5th Cir. 2016); *Bakersfield City Sch. Dist. of Kern Cty. v. Boyer*, 610 F.2d 621, 624 (9th Cir. 1979); *Louisiana Real Estate Appraisers Bd. v. United States Fed. Trade Comm’n*, No. 19-CV-214-BAJ-RLB, 2019 WL 3412162, at \*2 (M.D. La. July 29, 2019).

The purpose of Section 705 is to allow courts “to maintain the status quo . . . . The authority granted is equitable and should be used by both agencies and courts to prevent irreparable injury or afford parties an adequate judicial remedy.” *Bauer v. DeVos*, 325 F. Supp. 3d 74, 105 (D.D.C. 2018) (quoting APA, Pub. L. 1944–46, S. Doc. No. 248, at 277 (1946)); *id.* at 106–07; *see also Attorney General’s Manual on the Administrative Procedure Act* 105 (1947) (“The function of such a power is, as heretofore, to make judicial review effective”), <https://ia600406.us.archive.org/30/items/AttorneyGeneralsManual>



OnTheAdministrativeProcedureActOf1947/AttorneyGeneralsManualOnTheAdministrativeProcedureActOf1947.pdf.<sup>9</sup>

The same traditional equitable factors governing a motion for a preliminary injunction apply to an application for a Section 705 stay: (1) likelihood of success on the merits; (2) irreparable injury; (3) the balance of equities; and (4) the public interest. *See Texas*, 829 F.3d at 424, 435; *Humane Soc’y of United States v. Gutierrez*, 558 F.3d 896, 896 (9th Cir. 2009); *Schwartz v. Covington*, 341 F.2d 537, 538 (9th Cir. 1965); *Assoc. Sec. Corp. v. SEC*, 283 F.2d 773, 774–75 (10th Cir. 1960); *Virginia Petroleum Jobbers Ass’n v. Fed. Power Comm’n*, 259 F.2d 921, 925 (D.C. Cir. 1958) (per curiam); *see also Cronin v. U.S. Dep’t of Agric.*, 919 F.2d 439, 446 (7th Cir. 1990) (“The standard is the same whether a preliminary injunction against agency action . . . or a stay of that action is being sought . . .”).

Courts sometimes treat preliminary injunctions under Rule 65 and stays under Section 705 as interchangeable. *See Colorado Coal. for Homeless v. Gen Servs. Admin.*, No. 18-CV-1008-WJM-KLM, 2018 WL 3109087, at \*1 (D. Colo.

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<sup>9</sup> “The Supreme Court accords deference to the interpretations of APA provisions contained in the *Attorney General’s Manual*, both because it was issued contemporaneously with the passage of the APA and because of the significant role played by the Justice Department in drafting the APA.” *Mada-Luna v. Fitzpatrick*, 813 F.2d 1006, 1012 n.7 (9th Cir. 1987).

2018) (“The Coalition explicitly moves for a preliminary injunction under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65. Because this case seeks review of agency action under the APA, the proper authority for preliminary relief is 5 U.S.C. § 705: the public interest.”); *E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Trump*, 354 F. Supp. 3d 1094, 1119 n.20 (N.D. Cal. 2018).

## 2. Preliminary injunction standards

“A party can obtain a preliminary injunction by showing that (1) it is likely to succeed on the merits, (2) it is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, (3) the balance of equities tips in [its] favor, and (4) an injunction is in the public interest.” *Disney Enters., Inc. v. VidAngel, Inc.*, 869 F.3d 848, 856 (9th Cir. 2017) (quotations and citations omitted); *see also Winter v. Nat. Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 22 (2008). Under the Ninth Circuit’s “sliding scale” approach, these elements are “balanced, so that a stronger showing of one element may offset a weaker showing of another.” *Hernandez v. Sessions*, 872 F.3d 976, 990 (9th Cir. 2017) (quotations and citations omitted).<sup>10</sup>

### B. The Plaintiff States Are Likely to Succeed on Their APA Claims

The Plaintiff States are likely to prevail on three of their core claims. First, the Rule’s expansive new definition of “public charge”—on which the entirety

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<sup>10</sup> The “sliding scale” approach has been criticized as inconsistent with *Winter*. *See Davis v. Pension Benefit Guar. Corp.*, 571 F.3d 1288, 1296 (D.C. Cir. 2009) (Kavanaugh, J., concurring).

of the Rule is premised—deviates from the plain meaning of the statutory term, and therefore must be invalidated at Step One of the *Chevron* framework. *See Chevron, U.S.A. v. Nat. Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 467 U.S. 837, 842 (1984). Second, the Rule is contrary to law because it adopts an interpretation of “public charge” that had been expressly rejected by Congress, and its weighted factor test is contrary to the (i) “totality of circumstances” test mandated by INA Section 212(a)(4), (ii) Welfare Reform Act, and (iii) Rehabilitation Act. Third, the Rule is arbitrary and capricious because it fails to address evidence of the harm it inflicts on vulnerable people, and it includes factors in its public charge test that are unrelated to—and at times at odds with—its purported purpose.<sup>11</sup>

**1. DHS’s new definition of “public charge” is inconsistent with the term’s plain meaning and is contrary to law**

The Rule redefines “public charge” to mean “an alien who receives one or more public benefits” above the 12-month threshold. 8 C.F.R. § 212.21(a). DHS’s definition fails *Chevron* Step One because it is irreconcilable with the clear meaning of the term “public charge” as demonstrated by its text, history, and context.

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<sup>11</sup> Because the Plaintiff States are entitled to a stay or a preliminary injunction on the APA claims, this motion need not address the Plaintiff States’ other claim. *E.g., Versaterm Inc. v. City of Seattle*, No. C16-1217JLR, 2016 WL 4793239, at \*5 (W.D. Wash. Sept. 13, 2016).

1                   **a.     *Chevron* framework**

2           In reviewing an agency’s implementation of a statute, courts follow a  
 3 two-step approach. *Chevron*, 467 U.S. 842–44; *Empire Health Found. for Valley*  
 4 *Hosp. Med. Ctr. v. Price*, 334 F. Supp. 3d 1134, 1145 (E.D. Wash. 2018). First,  
 5 using the “traditional tools of statutory construction,” the court first determines  
 6 whether “the intent of Congress is clear.” *Id.* at 842 & n.9; *FDA v. Brown &*  
 7 *Williamson Tobacco Corp. (Brown & Williamson)*, 529 U.S. 120, 132 (2000)  
 8 (“traditional tools” include the statute’s text, history, structure, “context”—  
 9 including its place among other statutes enacted previously or “subsequently”—  
 10 as well as “common sense”); *Empire Health*, 334 F. Supp. 3d at 1145. If  
 11 Congress’s intent is clear, “that is the end of the matter.” *Chevron*, 467 U.S. at  
 12 842–43. If not, and the statute “is silent or ambiguous with respect to the specific  
 13 issue,” the court determines “whether the agency’s answer is based on a  
 14 permissible construction of the statute.” *Id.*

15                   **b.     Public charge means a person primarily dependent upon**  
 16                   **the government for subsistence**

17           The *Chevron* Step One inquiry into statutory meaning begins with the  
 18 language of the statute. *Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund v. United States*  
 19 *Dep’t of Agric.*, No. 2:17-CV-223-RMP, 2018 WL 2708747, at \*7 (E.D. Wash.  
 20 June 5, 2018). The text of the original 1882 public charge exclusion provided that  
 21 a “convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself  
 22 without becoming a public charge . . . shall not be permitted to land.” Immigration

1 Act of 1882, ch. 376, § 2, 22 Stat. 214. The most natural reading of “public  
2 charge” in the 1882 statute is one who is, as the text says, “unable to take care of  
3 himself or herself.” *Id.*

4 Because the statute does not define “public charge,” it must be presumed  
5 that the 47th Congress intended the term to have its “ordinary or natural meaning”  
6 in the “year [it] was enacted.” *Dir., Office of Workers’ Comp. Programs, Dep’t*  
7 *of Labor v. Greenwich Collieries*, 512 U.S. 267, 272 (1994). The period’s most  
8 comprehensive American dictionary defined the root word “charge” to mean  
9 “[a]nything committed to another’s custody, care, concern, or management.”  
10 *The Century Dictionary of the English Language* vol. IV at 929 (1889–91). This  
11 definition is consistent with historical definitions where “public charge” was  
12 interchangeable with “pauper.” *See id.* vol. XI at 4334 (defining “pauper” as “a  
13 very poor person; a person entirely destitute of property or means of support;  
14 particularly one who, on account of poverty, becomes *chargeable to the public*”)  
15 (emphasis added); accord Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English*  
16 *Language* 595 (1857).

17 This definition endured over time. *See Black’s Law Dictionary* 311 (3d ed.  
18 1933) (defining “public charge” as “[a] person whom it is necessary to support at  
19 public expense by reason of poverty, insanity, and poverty, disease and poverty,  
20 or idiocy and poverty” and—as used in the Immigration Act of 1917, Pub. L. 301,  
21 39 Stat. 874—to include “paupers”); *Black’s Law Dictionary* 233 (6th ed. 1990)

(an “indigent[; a] person whom it is necessary to support at public expense by reason of poverty alone or illness and poverty”).

**c. The history of the public charge exclusion confirms that Congress adopted the term’s common law meaning**

**i. Colonial and early state law sources**

Congress adopted the public charge exclusion against a long backdrop of colonial and state public charge laws. Because Congress based the Immigration Act of 1882 on those earlier laws, the term “public charge” “must be construed as they were understood at the time in the State[s].” *Shannon v. United States*, 512 U.S. 573, 581 (1994) (quoting *Capital Traction Co. v. Hof*, 174 U.S. 1, 36 (1899)).

In the American colonies, “public charges” were persons permanently incapable of caring for themselves and primarily dependent on the government, similar to a pauper. As Defendant USCIS acknowledges, due to opposition to “the immigration of ‘paupers,’ . . . several colonies enacted protective measures to prohibit the immigration of individuals who might become public charges.” *Public Charge Provisions of Immigration Law: A Brief Historical Background*, USCIS, [https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/our-history/public-charge-provisions-immigration-law-a-brief-historical-background#\\_ftnref1](https://www.uscis.gov/history-and-genealogy/our-history/public-charge-provisions-immigration-law-a-brief-historical-background#_ftnref1) (USCIS *Public Charge Hist. Backgr.*); see also Mass. Gen. Ct., Acts and Resolves 552, § 2 (Mar. 14, 1700); ECF No. 31 (First Amended Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief (FAC)) ¶ 46.

1 State laws of the 19th century reflect the same original meaning of “public  
 2 charge.” In response to mass migration of “large numbers of exceptionally  
 3 impoverished and destitute people” from Europe in the 1800s, states adopted  
 4 passenger laws limiting immigration of such persons—who were described as  
 5 “public charges,” “paupers,” or both. Hirota, *Expelling the Poor* 33; see, e.g., Act  
 6 of Mar. 20, 1850, ch. 105, § 1, 1850 Mass. Acts & Resolves 338, 339 (excluding  
 7 without a bond any “pauper, . . . destitute, or incompetent to take care of himself  
 8 or herself without becoming a public charge as a pauper”); FAC ¶ 48 (citing  
 9 similar New York, Rhode Island, and Maine laws).

10 Early cases evidence this common law understanding of “public charge,”  
 11 which required more than simply having “no visible means of support,” *City of*  
 12 *Boston v. Capen*, 61 Mass. 116, 121–22 (1851), but that persons be “unable to  
 13 take care of themselves,” *In re O’Sullivan*, 31 F. 447, 449 (C.C.S.D.N.Y.)  
 14 (quoting 22 Stat. 214); see, e.g., *Fischer v. Meader*, 111 A. 503, 504 (N.J. 1920)  
 15 (“abandoned child” in “legal effect . . . became a public charge, and a ward of the  
 16 state as parens patriae”); *Pine Twp. Overseers v. Franklin Twp. Overseers*, 4 Pa.  
 17 D. 715, 716, 1894 WL 3774, at \*2 (Pa. Quar. Sess. 1894) (“both mother and  
 18 child, the present pauper, were public charges for maintenance and support”);  
 19 *Bunker v. Ficke*, 6 Ohio Dec. Reprint 978, 979, 1880 WL 5770 (Ohio Dist. 1880)  
 20 (“The obvious intention of the framers of the constitution being to regard insane  
 21  
 22



1 persons as the wards of the state, to be under the fostering and protecting charge  
2 of the state . . .”).

### 3 ii. The Immigration Act of 1882

4 Congress enacted the first federal public charge exclusion in 1882 to fill  
5 the void left from the Supreme Court’s invalidation of state passenger laws.  
6 *See Henderson v. Mayor of City of New York*, 92 U.S. 259, 274 (1875).  
7 Borrowing directly from state laws to impose a federal public charge ground of  
8 inadmissibility, the 1882 Congress described “public charge” to express its  
9 traditional, common law meaning—a person “unable to take care of himself or  
10 herself,” Immigration Act of 1882, 22 Stat. 214—who primarily depends on the  
11 government for support. This understanding is reflected in the legislative history.  
12 *See* Complaint ¶ 62, *Make the Road New York, et al. v. Cuccinelli, et al.*,  
13 No. 19-cv-07993 (S.D.N.Y. filed Aug. 27, 2019) (*Make the Road Compl.*),  
14 Bays Decl. Ex. DDD;<sup>12</sup> *In re Day*, 27 F. 678, 681 (C.C.S.D.N.Y. 1886). Indeed,  
15 the 1882 Act created a federal immigration head-tax which was used in part for  
16 the “relief” of immigrants in economic “distress”—*i.e.*, those who were poor but  
17 not so destitute as to be considered public charges. 22 Stat. 214. Later bills  
18

19 <sup>12</sup> The FAC and the *Make the Road* Complaint both contain fuller  
20 discussions of the legislative history of the relevant immigration statutes than  
21 space limitations permit here, including citations to the congressional record and  
22 congressional reports. Plaintiffs incorporate those citations by reference.



1 changed the wording of the clause to “likely to become a public charge,” and this  
 2 language has remained in the statute to the present. *Make the Road* Compl. ¶ 60  
 3 n.12.

4 **iii. Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 and**  
 5 **subsequent enactments**

6 Congress overhauled federal immigration law in the Immigration and  
 7 Nationality Act of 1952 and reenacted the public charge exclusion. Pub. L.  
 8 82–414, 66 Stat. 163. The legislative history of the INA shows that Congress  
 9 intended to retain the common law meaning of “public charge.” *See* S. Rep. No.  
 10 1515, 81st Cong., 2d Sess., at 349 (1950) (“The subcommittee recommends that  
 11 the clause excluding persons likely to become public charges should be retained  
 12 in the law.”).

13 In 1990, Congress amended the INA to remove the “paupers, professional  
 14 beggars, or vagrants” exclusions, but it retained the public charge inadmissibility  
 15 ground. *See* Immigration Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-649, § 601(a)(4), 104 Stat.  
 16 4978, 5072 (codified as amended at 8 U.S.C. § 1182).

17 **iv. Welfare Reform and Immigration Reform Acts**

18 Congress enacted two major immigration reform statutes in 1996. Neither  
 19 statute purported to redefine “public charge” or alter the traditional and  
 20 established understanding of the term.

21 First, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation  
 22 Act of 1996 (Welfare Reform Act), Pub. L. 104-193, 110 Stat. 2105 (1996)

(codified as amended at 8 U.S.C. §§ 1601-46), restricted certain noncitizens' eligibility for most federal benefits.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, Congress allowed all "qualified" immigrants—including lawful permanent residents—to receive after five years of entry many forms of federal public benefits included in DHS's Rule. These include Medicaid, TANF, and SNAP. 8 U.S.C. §§ 1612(a)(2)(L), 1613(a). The "five-year ban" does not apply to certain benefits swept up in the Rule, including Section 8 housing vouchers. *Id.* §§ 1612(a)(2)(A) & (a)(2)(C), 1613(b)(1)–(2).<sup>14</sup>

Second, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (Immigration Reform Act)—enacted one month after the Welfare Reform Act—reenacted the existing INA public charge provision and codified the existing standard in case law for determining whether a noncitizen was

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<sup>13</sup> Prior to the Welfare Reform Act, lawfully present immigrants were generally eligible for many public benefits on similar terms as U.S. citizens. *See* H.R. Rpt. 104-725, 104th Cong., 2d Sess., July 30, 1996, at 379.

<sup>14</sup> States are authorized to determine the eligibility of qualified immigrants for some federal programs (TANF, social services block grants, and Medicaid). 8 U.S.C. § 1612(b)(1). Each state may determine the eligibility for any state public benefits, and a state may statutorily provide that "an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States is eligible for any State or local public benefit." 8 U.S.C. §§ 1621(d), 1622(a).

1 inadmissible as a public charge. 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(4). It provided that a public  
 2 charge determination should take account of the “totality of circumstances” and  
 3 codified the five factors long applied by immigration officials: the applicant’s  
 4 (1) age; (2) health; (3) family status; (4) assets, resources, and financial status;  
 5 and (5) education and skills. Pub. L. 104-208, Div. C, 110 Stat. 3009, Sec.  
 6 531(a)(4)(B) (codified as amended at 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(4)(B)(i)). Neither of  
 7 those 1996 statutes altered the well-established meaning of “public charge” under  
 8 the INA.

9 **v. Congress repeatedly rejected the definition of**  
 10 **“public charge” DHS now adopts**

11 Congress’s decision to maintain the definition of “public charge” was no  
 12 oversight. To the contrary, Congress repeatedly considered and rejected  
 13 proposals to amend the INA public charge provisions to apply to persons who  
 14 receive (or are considered likely to receive) the benefits DHS now deems  
 15 off-limits. *See, e.g., INS v. Cardoza-Fonseca*, 480 U.S. 421, 442–43 (1987)  
 16 (“Few principles of statutory construction are more compelling than the  
 17 proposition that Congress does not intend *sub silentio* to enact statutory language  
 18 that it has earlier discarded in favor of other language.”) (internal quotation marks  
 19 and citation omitted).

20 In the debate leading up to enactment of the Immigration Reform Act,  
 21 Congress considered and rejected a proposal to label anyone who received  
 22 means-tested public benefits a public charge. Immigration Control and Financial

1 Responsibility Act of 1996, H.R. 2202, 104th Cong. § 202 (1996); Pub. L.  
 2 104-208, Div. C, 110 Stat. 3009. The express purpose of this provision was to  
 3 overturn the settled understanding of “public charge” found in the case law.  
 4 *See Make the Road Compl.* ¶¶ 81–83.

5 In 2013, Congress repelled another effort to broaden the scope of the public  
 6 charge exclusion in a manner similar to DHS’s new definition. An amendment  
 7 proposed by then-Senator Jefferson B. Sessions to the Border Security, Economic  
 8 Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, S. 744, 113th Cong.  
 9 (2013), would have altered the definition of public charge to require applicants  
 10 to show “they were not likely to qualify even for non-cash employment supports  
 11 such as Medicaid . . . [and] SNAP.” S. Rep. No. 113-40, at 42 (2013). Once  
 12 again, the Senate rejected the amendment. *Id.*

13 By adopting virtually the same definition of “public charge” that Congress  
 14 rejected in 1996, the Rule contravenes the unambiguous meaning of the statute.

15 **d. The context of the public charge exclusion confirms that**  
 16 **Congress intended the term “public charge” to retain its**  
 17 **common law meaning**

18 In *Chevron* Step One, the court also “must place the provision in context,  
 19 interpreting the statute to create a symmetrical and coherent regulatory scheme.”  
 20 *Brown & Williamson*, 529 U.S. at 121 (internal quotation marks and citation  
 21 omitted). That “context” includes parallel statutory provisions, “other Acts,” *id.*,  
 22

1 and “the statutory backdrop of . . . agency directives,” *Nat’l Ass’n of Home*  
 2 *Builders v. Defenders of Wildlife*, 551 U.S. 644, 666 (2007).

3 **i. Early judicial and agency interpretations**

4 During the first half of the 20th century, early judicial interpretations of  
 5 the original public charge provisions confirmed Congress’s intent to exclude only  
 6 those primarily dependent on the government for their care or management. *See,*  
 7 *e.g., Howe v. United States ex rel. Savitsky*, 247 F. 292, 294 (2d Cir. 1917) (“[w]e  
 8 are convinced that Congress meant the act to exclude persons who were likely to  
 9 become occupants of almshouses for want of means with which to support  
 10 themselves in the future”); FAC ¶ 51 (collecting cases). Federal agencies charged  
 11 with enforcing those early federal immigration laws also read “public charge” to  
 12 mean a person incapable of self-support and dependent upon the state for  
 13 survival. *See USCIS Public Charge Hist. Backgr.* (“immigrants who showed they  
 14 had no physical or mental conditions that could prevent them from working and  
 15 who demonstrated a willingness to work were admitted”); FAC ¶ 53.

16 **ii. Modern agency interpretations**

17 Consistent with the original public meaning of “public charge,” federal  
 18 immigration authorities have applied the modern public charge provision only to  
 19 those dependent on government for survival. *See, e.g., Matter of Martinez-Lopez*,  
 20 10 I. & N. Dec. 409, 421 (A.G. 1962) (then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy  
 21 detailing the public charge doctrine’s “extensive judicial interpretation” and  
 22

1 explaining that the INA “requires more than a showing of a possibility that the  
 2 alien will require public support”); U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Final Rule: *Adjustment*  
 3 *of Status for Certain Aliens*, 54 FR 29,442-01 (July 12, 1989) (codified in relevant  
 4 part at 8 C.F.R. §§ 245a.2(k)(4), 245a.3(g)(4)(iii), 245a.4(b)(1)(iv)(C)) (even  
 5 where an immigrant’s “income may be below the poverty level,” he is “not  
 6 excludable” if he “has a consistent employment history which shows the ability  
 7 to support himself”); *Make the Road* Compl. ¶¶ 70–71. Congress’ reenactment  
 8 of the INA’s public charge exclusion “against the backdrop of” these “consistent  
 9 and repeated statements” by immigration enforcement agencies precludes DHS’s  
 10 novel definition in the Rule. *Brown & Williamson*, 529 U.S. at 144.

11 **iii. Post-1996 Agency Field Guidance confirms the**  
 12 **settled interpretation of “public charge”**

13 In 1999 Field Guidance, INS confirmed that the Welfare Reform and  
 14 Immigration Reform Acts did not change the “longstanding” law governing  
 15 public charge inadmissibility.<sup>15</sup> To the contrary, the meaning of “public charge”

16 \_\_\_\_\_  
 17 <sup>15</sup> Following the Welfare Reform Act, public confusion emerged about the  
 18 relationship between receipt of federal, state, or local benefits and the public  
 19 charge provisions of federal immigration law. *Field Guidance on Deportability*  
 20 *and Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds*, 64 Fed. Reg. at 28,689-01,  
 21 28,689 (May 26, 1999) (Field Guidance). According to the U.S. Department of  
 22 State, “such confusion led many persons in the immigrant community to choose

1 “has been developed in several [INS], BIA, and Attorney General decisions” and  
 2 codified in INA “section 212(a)(4) itself” in its “ ‘totality of circumstances’ test.”  
 3 Field Guidance on Deportability and Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds,  
 4 64 Fed. Reg. at 28,689; 28,690 (May 26, 1999).

5 Consistent with the common law definition, INS confirmed that “likely to  
 6 become a public charge” means “likely to become . . . primarily dependent on the  
 7 Government for subsistence, as demonstrated by either the receipt of public cash  
 8 assistance for income maintenance or institutionalization for long-term care at  
 9 Government expense.” *Id.* at 28,692. The Field Guidance expressly excluded  
 10 from the public charge determination noncash benefits such as Medicaid (for  
 11 those not institutionalized), nutrition programs like SNAP, and housing benefits.  
 12 INS noted that it had “never been [INS] policy that any receipt of services or  
 13 benefits paid for in whole or in part from public funds . . . indicates that the alien  
 14 is likely to become a public charge.” *Id.* The Field Guidance governed the  
 15 agencies responsible for public charge inadmissibility determinations, including

16 \_\_\_\_\_  
 17 not to sign up for important benefits, especially health-related benefits, which  
 18 they were eligible to receive” out of “concern[s] it would affect their or a family  
 19 member’s immigration status.” U.S. State Department Cable, INA 212(A)(4)  
 20 Public Charge: Policy Guidance, Ref: 9 FAM 40.41 (State Department cable).  
 21 INS issued the Field Guidance for public charge determinations to eliminate the  
 22 confusion. 64 Fed. Reg. at 28,689-01.

1 DHS, for more than two decades. *See, e.g.*, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Public Charge  
 2 Fact Sheet, 2009 WL 3453730 (Oct. 29, 2011); Public Charge Fact Sheet, USCIS,  
 3 Apr. 29, 2011.

4 **2. The Rule adopts an interpretation expressly rejected by**  
 5 **Congress**

6 The Rule also is contrary to law because it adopts a statutory interpretation  
 7 explicitly disavowed by Congress. Here, Congress has repeatedly rejected the  
 8 “transformative” immigration policy the Administration now purports to  
 9 establish.<sup>16</sup> *See supra* at 29–30.

10 The Ninth Circuit has already admonished this administration for seeking  
 11 to “coopt Congress’s power to legislate” through executive actions. *City &*  
 12 *County of San Francisco*, 897 F.3d at 1234 (Rejecting Executive Order regarding  
 13 sanctuary cities, reasoning “Congress has frequently considered and thus far  
 14 rejected legislation accomplishing the goals of the Executive Order . . . . Not only  
 15 has the Administration claimed for itself Congress’s exclusive spending power,  
 16 it has also attempted to coopt Congress’s power to legislate.”); *see also Brown &*  
 17 *Williamson*, 529 U.S. at 147 (holding FDA lacks authority to regulate tobacco  
 18 products as customarily marketed and noting that “before enacting the FCLAA  
 19 in 1965, Congress considered and rejected several proposals to give the FDA the

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20  
 21 <sup>16</sup> Sullivan & Shear, *Trump Sees an Obstacle to Getting His Way on*  
 22 *Immigration: His Own Officials*, *supra* note 4.



1 authority to regulate tobacco”); *Pennsylvania v. Trump*, 351 F. Supp. 3d 791, 821  
 2 (E.D. Pa. 2019), *aff’d sub nom. Pennsylvania v. President United States*, 930 F.3d  
 3 543 (3d Cir. 2019), as amended (July 18, 2019) (rejecting agency interpretation  
 4 because, in part, “Congress [previously] explicitly rejected an attempt to add to  
 5 the ACA an exemption similar to that contained in the Final Rules”).

6 As Judge Srinivasan on the DC Circuit observed, “[a]n activist President  
 7 with control over the rulemaking process could use his power to press agencies  
 8 beyond statutory limits that he was unable to persuade Congress to remove. Such  
 9 a President would be guilty of unfaithful execution of the laws.” *United States*  
 10 *Telecom Ass’n v. Fed. Commc’n’s Comm’n*, 855 F.3d 381, 414 (D.C. Cir. 2017)  
 11 (quoting Thomas O. McGarity, *Presidential Control of Regulatory Agency*  
 12 *Decisionmaking*, 36 Am. U. L. Rev. 443, 455 (1987)).

### 13 **3. The Rule’s weighted criteria are contrary to law**

14 DHS’s new definition of “public charge,” based on its unwarranted focus  
 15 on poverty, distorts the “totality of circumstances” test. This fundamental error  
 16 compels invalidation of the rule. *See, e.g., Davis Cty. Solid Waste Mgmt. v. U.S.*  
 17 *EPA*, 108 F.3d 1454, 1459 (D.C. Cir. 1997) (per curiam); *North Carolina v. EPA*,  
 18 531 F.3d 896, 929, *on reh’g in part*, 550 F.3d 1176 (D.C. Cir. 2008) (per curiam).

#### 19 **a. The weighted criteria are contrary to the INA and** 20 **Immigration Reform Act**

21 The Rule’s new public charge test transforms the “totality of  
 22 circumstances” inquiry mandated by Congress into a categorical test of DHS’s

1 own making. Because the four “heavily weighted negative factors” overlap with  
 2 other enumerated “negative” factors, any one heavily weighted negative factor  
 3 may trigger a public charge finding under the new Rule. The new test as written  
 4 treats one main consideration—poverty—as paramount, if not dispositive,  
 5 elevating it above the required statutory factors set forth in the INA itself.

6 The heavily weighted factor of whether an immigrant “has received or has  
 7 been certified or approved to receive one or more public benefits” above the  
 8 12-month threshold is duplicative of several other negative factors: an immigrant  
 9 who met or exceeded the public benefits threshold will *ipso facto* have “applied  
 10 for or received any public benefit” in any amount and be virtually certain to have  
 11 a “gross income [of] less than 125 percent” of the FPG (both of which are  
 12 nominally separate negative, but not heavily weighted, factors). 8 C.F.R.  
 13 § 212.22(b)(4)(i)(A), (b)(4)(ii)(E)(1). The past receipt of public benefits above  
 14 the 12-month threshold appears dispositive, contrary to the INA’s mandated  
 15 totality of circumstances inquiry. *See, e.g., Martinez-Farias v. Holder*, 338 F.  
 16 App’x 729, 730–31 (9th Cir. 2009) (in making public charge determination, INA  
 17 Section 212(a)(4)(B) requires decision maker to consider all statutory factors).

18 The Rule likewise makes an immigrant’s medical condition virtually  
 19 dispositive. A medical condition counts as a heavily weighted negative factor if  
 20 the following two conditions apply: (1) the immigrant “has been diagnosed with  
 21 a medical condition that is likely to require extensive medical treatment or  
 22

1 institutionalization or that will interfere with [his or her] ability to provide for  
2 himself or herself, attend school, or work;” and (2) the immigrant “is uninsured  
3 and has neither the prospect of obtaining private health insurance, nor the  
4 financial resources to pay for reasonably foreseeable medical costs related to such  
5 medical condition.” 8 C.F.R. § 212.22(c)(1)(iii). This heavily weighted factor is  
6 duplicative of other, ostensibly separate, negative factors. *See, e.g.*, 8 C.F.R.  
7 § 212.22(b)(2)(ii)(B) (treating as negative factor if immigrant “has been  
8 diagnosed with a medical condition that is likely to require extensive medical  
9 treatment or institutionalization or that will interfere with [his or her] ability to  
10 provide and care for himself or herself, to attend school, or to work”). Because  
11 the medical condition factor is likely to be dispositive under the Rule’s weighted  
12 test, it is contrary to the totality of circumstances inquiry mandated by the INA.

13 The overlapping medical condition factors are contrary to the INA for  
14 another reason: they go well beyond the discrete “health-related grounds” that  
15 Congress has expressly set forth as basis of inadmissibility. 8 U.S.C.  
16 § 1182(a)(1)(A). Under INA Section 212(a)(1), a noncitizen is inadmissible for  
17 health-related reasons only if he or she (1) has a “communicable disease of public  
18 health significance”; (2) failed to submit proof of vaccinations; (3) has or had a  
19 “physical or mental disorder and a history of behavior associated with the  
20 disorder” posing a present “threat to the property, safety, or welfare” of the  
21 immigrant or others; or (4) has been determined to be a “drug abuser or addict.”  
22

1 *Id.* The provision of those limited health-based grounds of inadmissibility  
2 strongly suggests that Congress did not intend for the Department to create much  
3 broader health-based exclusions under the guise of a public charge regulation.  
4 *See, e.g., Tennessee Valley Auth. v. Hill*, 437 U.S. 153, 188 (1978) (maxim of  
5 *expressio unius est exclusio alterius*).

6 The statutory history makes that intent even clearer. The 1952 INA's  
7 health-related exclusions were much broader, rendering inadmissible anyone  
8 who was "insane," "epilep[tic]," or who had "a physical defect disease, or  
9 disability, when determined by the consular or immigration officer to be of such  
10 a nature that it may affect the ability of the alien to earn a living." 66 Stat. 163,  
11 182, § 212(a). Congress eliminated those grounds of exclusion in the  
12 Immigration Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 4978, § 601. Yet the Department has now  
13 engrafted that broad health exclusion onto its new public charge test, despite  
14 Congress having stripped it from the INA decades ago. In this respect, the Rule  
15 is contrary to the text of the statute and the clearly expressed intent of Congress.  
16 *See, e.g., Cal. Cosmetology Coal. v. Riley*, 110 F.3d 1454, 1460 (9th Cir. 1997)  
17 ("A regulation may not serve to amend a statute, nor add to the statute 'something  
18 which is not there.'") (citation omitted) (quoting *United States v. Calamaro*, 354  
19 U.S. 351, 359 (1957)).

**b. The weighted criteria are contrary to the Welfare Reform Act**

The Rule’s focus on immigrants’ use of non-cash public benefits to deprive them of the ability to remain in the United States also is inconsistent with the Welfare Reform Act, which expressly allowed qualified immigrants to receive after five years of entry many forms of federal public benefits included in the Rule. *See supra* at 27–29. *Iwata v. Intel Corp.*, 349 F. Supp. 2d 135, 147 (D. Mass. 2004) (rejecting interpretation of statute that would allow for a “bait-and-switch” where a person would be covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act up until the point she needs the act and reasoning that statute “must be interpreted to give effect to the rights [it] has created”); *see also Rotenberry v. Comm’r Internal Rev.*, 847 F.2d 229, 233 (5th Cir. 1988) (“Congress did not intend that the Secretary set a trap for the unwary.”).

**c. The weighted criteria are contrary to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**

The Rule also is contrary to the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits “any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance” or “any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency,” from excluding, denying benefits to, or discriminating against persons with disabilities. 29 U.S.C. § 794(a). The Rule violates this provision by requiring officials to consider an applicant’s “medical condition”—including a “disability diagnosis”—to weigh in favor of a public charge determination. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 212.22(c)(1)(iii)(A); 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,407–08. Such facially discriminatory treatment will be exacerbated by the

1 consideration of other negative factors related to a disability, such as receipt of  
 2 Medicaid home and community-based services. *See* 8 C.F.R. §§ 212.21(b)(5),  
 3 212.22(b)(4)(E); 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,367–68; *see also* 42 U.S.C. § 1396n(i).<sup>17</sup>  
 4 Because the Rule’s overlapping criteria operate in such a way that an applicant’s  
 5 disability will often be the “but for” cause of a public charge determination, it  
 6 violates Section 504. *See, e.g., D.F. ex rel. L.M.P. v. Leon Cty. Sch. Bd.*,  
 7 No. 4:13CV3-RH/CAS, 2014 WL 28798, at \*2 (N.D. Fla. Jan. 2, 2014) (under  
 8 Rehabilitation Act, plaintiff’s disability must be a “but for” cause of the denial of  
 9 services, but the disability need not be the “sole” cause); *Franco-Gonzalez v.*  
 10 *Holder*, No. CV 10-02211 DMG (DTBx), 2013 WL 3674492, at \*4 (C.D. Cal.  
 11 Apr. 23, 2013); *Lovell v. Chandler*, 303 F.3d 1039, 1053 (9th Cir. 2002).

#### 12 **4. The Rule is arbitrary or capricious**

13 A regulation is arbitrary and capricious if the agency “relied on factors  
 14 which Congress has not intended it to consider, entirely failed to consider an  
 15 important aspect of the problem, offered an explanation for its decision that runs  
 16 \_\_\_\_\_

17 <sup>17</sup> Moreover, receiving Medicaid services will disqualify many disabled  
 18 applicants from two independent *positive* public charge factors: private health  
 19 insurance and sufficient household assets to cover reasonably foreseeable  
 20 medical costs. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 212.22(c)(2)(iii); 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,299 (explaining  
 21 the first “heavily weighted positive factor” is “in addition to the [second] positive  
 22 factor”).

1 counter to the evidence before the agency, or is so implausible that it could not  
 2 be ascribed to a difference in view or the product of agency expertise.”  
 3 *Motor Vehicle Mfrs. Ass’n v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co. (State Farm)*,  
 4 463 U.S. 29, 43 (1983). When an agency departs from a well-established prior  
 5 policy that “engendered serious reliance interests”—as DHS has done here—the  
 6 agency must provide a more “detailed justification” for its actions. *FCC v. Fox*  
 7 *Television Stations, Inc.*, 556 U.S. 502, 515 (2009). DHS has failed to do so.

8 DHS received over 265,000 comments—the “vast majority” of which  
 9 opposed the Rule and provided compelling evidence of devastating harms likely  
 10 to result from its implementation. 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,304; *see, e.g.*, Bays Decl.  
 11 Exs. H–CCC (examples of comments submitted in opposition to the Rule). DHS  
 12 largely ignored these concerns and instead chose to finalize—without sufficiently  
 13 reasoned justification—a Rule that all but promises to inflict the very harms  
 14 warned of by commenters. Where DHS did address concerns, it largely brushed  
 15 them aside, stating in conclusory fashion that it did not intend to cause the harms  
 16 at issue or the purported goal of the Rule merited the trade-off. The Rule is  
 17 arbitrary and capricious for two primary reasons: (1) DHS failed to address,  
 18 justify, or even meaningfully evaluate the many significant harms identified by  
 19 commenters; and (2) the Rule promotes the consideration of factors entirely  
 20 unrelated to—and at times directly at odds with—its purported purpose.



**a. DHS failed to justify or meaningfully address the Rule’s many devastating harms**

DHS has failed to address drastic harms the Rule will cause, including to public health generally and to vulnerable populations specifically, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

**i. DHS disregarded evidence the Rule will cause public health crises**

DHS received compelling evidence and comments warning the Rule was likely to cause significant public health crises. *See, e.g.*, Bays Decl. Exs. R at 31–32; T at 107–09. By deterring participation in Medicaid, the Rule would result in decreased vaccinations and a corresponding increase in the transmission of communicable diseases. 84 Fed Reg. at 41,384 (noting comments stating that “uninsured individuals are much less likely to be vaccinated,” and that “even a five percent reduction in vaccine coverage could trigger a significant measles outbreak”); Bays Decl. Exs. J at 2–3 (“Discouraged access to preventive services would inevitably have a devastating impact on immunization coverage for immigrant populations.”); FF at 3 (“[D]ecreased vaccinations and untreated communicable diseases will place the American public at risk for outbreaks.”).

DHS also received comments identifying a host of other public health crises likely to result from the Rule, including malnutrition, unintended pregnancies, substance abuse, obesity, homelessness, untreated chronic illnesses, and mental health disorders. *See, e.g.*, Bays Decl. Exs. O at 1–2, AA at 2, EE at 2–3, GG at 1, HH at 1, II at 2, NN at 3 (warning of harm to individuals suffering



1 from chronic medical conditions and diseases such as Hepatitis B, HIV,  
 2 tuberculosis, and blood cancers such as lymphoma and leukemia); Exs. OO at 7,  
 3 QQ at 2 (warning of reduced early detection and treatment of sexually transmitted  
 4 diseases); Ex. M at 6 (warning of reduced access to family planning resources).

5 DHS acknowledged the Rule may lead to these public health crises.  
 6 *See, e.g.*, 83 Fed. Reg. at 51,270 (“[D]isenrollment or forgoing enrollment in  
 7 public benefits program by [otherwise eligible] aliens” may result in, among  
 8 other things, increased obesity, malnutrition, and transmission of communicable  
 9 diseases). Nevertheless, DHS still has not conducted any adequate analysis to  
 10 measure the public health effects on the American public. *See, e.g.*, Bays Decl.  
 11 Ex. J at 2 (“[W]e are concerned that [DHS] failed to quantify the human and  
 12 economic impact from [either] the increased prevalence of communicable  
 13 diseases [or] the fact that the prevalence could be exacerbated by fewer  
 14 vaccinated individuals.”). DHS instead responded that it would exempt from  
 15 consideration receipt of Medicaid benefits only for pregnant women and  
 16 individuals under 21 years of age. *See* 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,384 (asserting, without  
 17 evidentiary support, that these exemptions “should address a substantial portion,  
 18 though not all, of the vaccinations issue”).

19 DHS’s cursory response disregards overwhelming evidence that even a  
 20 slight decrease in population immunity may give rise to a dangerous outbreak of  
 21 communicable diseases. Bays Decl. Exs. J at 2–3, T at 107–09. And, DHS’s  
 22

1 response—if any—to the other likely public health crises is even more  
 2 problematic. *See* 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,384 (arguing without analysis that, in lieu of  
 3 Medicaid, unidentified “local health centers and state health departments may  
 4 provide certain health services addressing substance abuse and mental  
 5 disorders”). DHS’s failure to appropriately analyze or respond to overwhelming  
 6 evidence of potentially devastating public health crises underscores that the Rule  
 7 is arbitrary and capricious.

8 **ii. DHS disregarded evidence of the Rule’s harmful**  
 9 **effects on children**

10 DHS received numerous comments and compelling evidence showing the  
 11 Rule would inflict dramatic and lasting harms on vulnerable children.  
 12 Commenters explained that the Rule will cause at-risk children to suffer  
 13 increased hunger, malnutrition, and homelessness. Commenters also provided  
 14 evidence showing the trauma resulting from childhood food insecurity and  
 15 housing instability is likely to have lifelong effects, severely compromising these  
 16 children’s physical and mental health, educational outcomes, and employment  
 17 prospects. Bays Decl. Exs. S at 32–35; VV at 12–13. The lasting trauma of such  
 18 childhood instability results in a broad variety of negative outcomes, including  
 19 chronic asthma, higher incidences of unplanned pregnancies, substance abuse,  
 20 depression, and behavioral challenges. *Id.*; Bays Decl. Exs. T at 61–62; V at 4.

21 While detailing the harms the Rule will inflict upon vulnerable children,  
 22 commenters also questioned what reasonable basis DHS had for applying such a

1 rigid public charge analysis to children in the first place, as they are too young to  
 2 work and their use of public benefits is not probative of their likelihood of  
 3 becoming a public charge when older. Bays Decl. Ex. T at 74-78. DHS itself  
 4 agrees the programs at issue are intended to *help* children become healthy, safe,  
 5 and successful in their educations, thus improving their employment prospects  
 6 and moving them toward the Rule’s purported goal of self-sufficiency. 84 Fed.  
 7 Reg. at 41,370–71 (acknowledging “many of the public benefits programs [at  
 8 issue] aim to better future economic and health outcomes for minor recipients”).

9 In response, DHS merely amended the Proposed Rule to exclude from  
 10 consideration only the receipt of Medicaid benefits by individuals under 21. DHS  
 11 will still, however, consider a young child’s receipt of SNAP or federal housing  
 12 assistance as evidence the child is likely to become a public charge. DHS’s failure  
 13 to address the overwhelming evidence showing children will suffer severe harms  
 14 from the Rule’s implementation (directly undermining their chances of reaching  
 15 DHS’s purported goal of “self-sufficiency”) is arbitrary and capricious,  
 16 underscoring the Plaintiff States’ likelihood of success on the merits.

17 **iii. DHS disregarded the Rule’s harmful and**  
 18 **discriminatory effects on the elderly and individuals**  
 19 **with disabilities**

20 DHS received many comments detailing the discriminatory and harmful  
 21 effects the Rule will have on the elderly and individuals with disabilities. *See,*  
 22 *e.g.*, 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,367. For example, commenters noted that counting an

1 individual's disability as a negative health factor was discriminatory and would  
2 overlap with other factors. Bays Decl. Ex. X at 6 (“[T]he proposed formula  
3 effectively authorizes blanket determinations that anyone with a significant  
4 disability is likely to become a public charge.”). Further, many of the services on  
5 which people with disabilities rely are available only through Medicaid, meaning  
6 the Rule will separate these already-vulnerable individuals from the very services  
7 that assist them in reaching DHS’s purported goal of “self-sufficiency.” Bays  
8 Decl. Exs. JJ at 6; L at 9–10 (“Individuals with significant disabilities, including  
9 even highly educated professionals and business owners, typically must retain  
10 Medicaid coverage because no other public or private program covers the  
11 attendant care and equipment they need to get up, get dressed, and go to work.”).

12 Similarly, the Rule focuses almost exclusively on the age and economic  
13 value of elderly applicants, ignoring the many other contributions they make to  
14 family stability, including caring for children and enabling other family members  
15 to work. Bays Decl. Ex. S at 80. Preventing these elderly applicants from  
16 accessing benefits they have paid for with their taxes would *reduce* their  
17 self-sufficiency, severely endanger their health, and make it more difficult for  
18 them to live with and contribute to their families. Bays Decl. Ex. KK at 7–9.

19 DHS readily conceded the potentially “outsized impact” the Rule might  
20 have on specific vulnerable populations, including individuals with disabilities.  
21 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,368. DHS largely dismissed such concerns, however, noting  
22

1 simply that age and health are statutory factors and “it is not the intent, nor is it  
 2 the effect of this rule to find a person a public charge *solely* based on his  
 3 disability.” *Id.* (emphasis added). But, as commenters noted, DHS’s selection of  
 4 arbitrary, poorly defined, and overlapping factors will not only inflict severe  
 5 harm on these already vulnerable populations but will also give immigration  
 6 officials unfettered discretion to deem them public charges. Bays Decl. Exs. L at  
 7 12–14; X at 6. DHS’s disregard for the evidence it received, as well as its refusal  
 8 to meaningfully address the discriminatory and lasting harms on these  
 9 populations, underscores the arbitrary and capricious nature of the Rule.

10 **b. DHS ignored evidence showing the factors in the public**  
 11 **charge analysis are arbitrary and capricious**

12 DHS’s multifactor test is itself arbitrary and capricious. As set forth below,  
 13 DHS relies on vague, poorly defined factors that are inconsistent with—and often  
 14 directly at odds with—the Rule’s purported purpose, further demonstrating the  
 15 lack of any “rational connection between the facts found and the choice made.”  
 16 *State Farm*, 463 U.S. at 43; Bays Decl. Ex. R at 40. Below are a few such  
 17 examples.

18 **i. Income thresholds**

19 The Rule imposes arbitrary income thresholds for making public charge  
 20 determinations, despite DHS’s own evidence that such thresholds are unrelated  
 21 to the Rule’s stated purpose. Under the Rule, an income “below [the] level of 125  
 22 percent of FPG would generally be a heavily weighed negative factor,” 84 Fed.

1 Reg. at 41,332, while a household income higher than 250% of the FPG (\$64,375  
 2 annually for a family of four) would be “heavily positive.” 84 Fed. Reg. at  
 3 41,502-04; 8 C.F.R. § 212.22(c). Many commenters, however, noted the arbitrary  
 4 and capricious nature of these thresholds, as well as the devastating effects they  
 5 will have on hardworking, law-abiding immigrants. *See, e.g.*, Bays Decl. Ex. R  
 6 at 47–48 (warning that under the arbitrary income thresholds, “nearly 200,000  
 7 married couples in the United States would be faced with a wrenching choice:  
 8 leave the United States, or live apart”).

9 DHS’s reliance on these income thresholds is irrational based also on  
 10 DHS’s own evidence and data. In the Proposed Rule’s preamble, DHS defended  
 11 the income thresholds on the ground “[t]he percentage of people receiving these  
 12 public benefits generally goes down as the income percentage increases.” 83 Fed.  
 13 Reg. at 51,204. This assertion rings hollow, though, as eligibility for public  
 14 benefits is generally means-tested based on an applicant’s income. DHS’s data  
 15 shows that even immigrants in the lowest-income group analyzed—those with  
 16 incomes below 125% of FPG—were in general *unlikely* to receive such public  
 17 benefits. 83 Fed. Reg. at 51,204 tbl. 28. Medicaid, the most-utilized public benefit  
 18 received by the group, had a participation rate of 39.2%. Further, such rigid  
 19 income thresholds may lead to the perverse result that an applicant who works  
 20 full-time making minimum wage but has never used *any* of the benefits at issue  
 21 would be assigned a negative factor and branded a public charge. In  
 22

1 “contradict[ing] the evidence before” DHS, the Rule is “internally inconsistent,”  
 2 “arbitrary and capricious.” *Nat’l Parks Conservation Ass’n v. EPA*, 788 F.3d  
 3 1134, 1141 (9th Cir. 2015).

4 **ii. English proficiency**

5 DHS treats as a negative factor an immigrant’s “lack of English  
 6 proficiency.” 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,435. DHS cites no evidence suggesting that  
 7 immigrants “lacking English proficiency”—a vague and poorly defined factor—  
 8 are “more likely than not at any time in the future” to receive the public benefits  
 9 at issue. 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,501. Instead, DHS starts from its conclusion and  
 10 works backward, asserting that in a USCIS survey of noncitizens, the rate of  
 11 enrollment in non-cash benefits programs was lower among “those who spoke  
 12 English either well or very well (about 15 to 20 percent)” compared to “those  
 13 who either spoke English poorly or not at all (about 25 to 30 percent).” 84 Fed.  
 14 Reg. at 41,448. As numerous commenters noted, DHS’s reliance on such an  
 15 arbitrary, undefined factor not only affords undue discretion to immigration  
 16 officials but also ignores a wealth of evidence demonstrating that an immigrant’s  
 17 language proficiency is not an immutable characteristic making them likely to  
 18 become a public charge. *See, e.g.,* Bays Decl. Ex. XX at 6–7 (“Although  
 19 non-citizens who are limited English proficient may face initial challenges in  
 20 obtaining certain jobs, their ability to speak another language may serve them  
 21  
 22

1 well economically in the long run.”); *see Arizona Cattle Growers’ Ass’n v. U.S.*  
 2 *Fish & Wildlife*, 273 F.3d 1229, 1251 (9th Cir. 2001) (agency action was  
 3 “arbitrary and capricious” based on “lack of an articulated, rational connection”  
 4 between regulatory condition and purpose as well as the “the vagueness of the  
 5 condition itself”). And, DHS’s own data once again undermines its conclusion,  
 6 as its survey shows immigrants with limited English proficiency were more likely  
 7 *not* to utilize public benefits. 83 Fed. Reg. at 51,195 tbl. 24.

### 8 **iii. Credit scores**

9 The Rule considers credit reports and credit scores in the public charge  
 10 analysis. 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,425. DHS’s reliance on such evidence is not justified,  
 11 as there is no evidence credit scores or reports have any relevance in determining  
 12 whether someone is likely to become a public charge. Bays Decl. Exs. Y at 1–3;  
 13 Z at 1–3; TT at 1–4; ZZ at 1–3. Consideration of credit reports in this context is  
 14 arbitrary, as (1) immigrants are likely to have no or thin credit histories and  
 15 artificially low credit scores; (2) credit reports are not generally available in  
 16 languages other than English, which could limit immigrants with language  
 17 barriers from correcting errors (thus double-counting English proficiency in the  
 18 public charge analysis); and (3) a bad credit score is frequently the result of a  
 19 temporary circumstance such as illness or job loss and does not reflect whether  
 20 someone is likely to become a public charge. Further, credit reports suffer from  
 21 unacceptable rates of inaccuracy, with at least 21% of consumers having verified  
 22



1 errors on their reports. Bays Decl. Exs. Y at 1–3; Z at 2. DHS offers no rationale  
 2 for introducing such dramatically high error rates into the public charge analysis,  
 3 and although it promises not to consider “verified errors,” the process for  
 4 consumers to address such errors is extremely burdensome—especially for  
 5 immigrants—and private credit reporting agencies may still fail to correct them.

6 \* \* \*

7 For the reasons stated above, the Plaintiff States are likely to prevail on the  
 8 merits of their claims that the Rule violates the APA because it is contrary to law  
 9 and arbitrary or capricious.

10 **C. Absent a Stay or Injunctive Relief, the Plaintiff States Will Suffer**  
 11 **Immediate and Irreparable Harm**

12 Were the Final Rule to take effect, the Plaintiff States are “likely to suffer  
 13 irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief.” *Winter*, 555 U.S. at 20.  
 14 Because the Final Rule will cause mass disenrollment and forbearance from  
 15 enrollment by immigrants from federal and state benefits programs, it will result  
 16 in worsened health, nutrition, and housing outcomes for those individuals. This  
 17 vitiates the purposes of state programs, results in deterioration in health and  
 18 well-being for state residents, and exponentially increases the financial burden  
 19 on the States.

20 **1. Categories of irreparable harm to be considered by the Court**

21 The Rule triggers three forms of irreparable harms. First, “ongoing harms  
 22 to [the Plaintiff States’] organizational missions.” *Valle Del Sol v. Whiting*,

723 F.3d 1006, 1029 (9th Cir. 2013); *League of Women Voters of United States v. Newby*, 838 F.3d 1, 9 (D.C. Cir. 2016); *E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant*, 354 F. Supp. 3d at 1109. Second, negative “consequences for public health” and well-being. *State v. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 286 F. Supp. 3d 1054, 1074 (N.D. Cal. 2018); *see also California v. Health & Human Servs.*, 281 F. Supp. 3d 806, 830 (N.D. Cal. 2017), *aff’d in pertinent part sub nom. California v. Azar*, 911 F.3d 558 (9th Cir. 2018). Indeed, the Ninth Circuit has held repeatedly that loss of public health benefits constitutes irreparable injury. *See M.R. v. Dreyfus*, 697 F.3d 706, 732–33 (9th Cir. 2012); *Beltran v. Myers*, 677 F.2d 1317, 1322 (9th Cir. 1982). Third, uncompensable economic harm—which may include “budget uncertainty” experienced by government organizations that cannot “budget, plan for the future, and properly serve their residents,” *County of Santa Clara v. Trump*, 250 F. Supp. 3d 497, 537 (N.D. Cal. 2017). *California v. Azar*, 911 F.3d at 581; *Idaho v. Coeur d’Alene Tribe*, 794 F.3d 1039, 1046 (9th Cir. 2015); *California v. Health and Human Servs.*, 351 F. Supp. 3d 1267, 1298 (N.D. Cal. 2019).

## **2. Disenrollment from federal and state programs will result in irreparable harm to health care, nutrition, and housing**

The direct disenrollment from the listed federal programs, and anticipated chilling effects to enrollment in state benefit programs, will result in irreparable harms to state residents, the mission of state programs, and ultimately to state treasuries. Proposed Rule, *Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds*, 83 Fed.

1 Reg. at 51,114, 51,266–69 (Oct. 18, 2019); 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,312 (conceding  
2 that the Rule will result in significant disenrollment by immigrants); *see supra* at  
3 10–12.

4 The initial, and potentially most significant, area affected by  
5 disenrollments as a result of the Rule is health care. Medicaid is a vital source of  
6 preventative care, lessens financial hardship, helps women have healthy  
7 pregnancies, and reduces preventable mortality. *See supra* at 12–13. Even under  
8 DHS’s estimate, were 2.5% of immigrants to choose to forgo health care to  
9 protect their immigration status, the results would be immediate, predictable and  
10 irreversible. *See supra* at 11. Put simply, “[p]eople will die. The anxiety and fear  
11 generated in the immigrant population will lead to people not seeking care for  
12 emergent conditions (heart attacks, for example).” Oliver Decl. ¶ 21.

13 Beyond the individual effect, a lack of health care harms entire families  
14 because those who disenroll may be deterred from seeking coverage for their  
15 dependent children, no matter the minor’s immigration status. *See supra*  
16 at 13–14. Furthermore, this disenrollment will have community-wide effects,  
17 including the prevalence of disease “among members of the U.S. citizen  
18 population who are not vaccinated.” 83 Fed. Reg. at 51,270; 84 Fed. Reg.  
19 at 41,384; *see supra* at 13–14. Finally, forgone health care coverage and  
20 preventative care, as DHS admits, will cause higher and more frequent  
21 emergency services and uncompensated care costs, as immigrants without  
22

1 healthcare turn to the emergency room for care. 84 Fed. Reg. at 41,384; *see supra*  
 2 at 14. These increased costs “shall now fall solely on the [States’] taxpayers,”  
 3 harming the Plaintiff States’ financial health. Pryor Decl. ¶ 10.

4 Second, the Final Rule will also create food insecurity, resulting in  
 5 increased costs to the Plaintiff States and the frustration of programs which aim  
 6 to create a well-nourished, productive population. SNAP, and corresponding  
 7 state programs, will likely suffer reduction in enrollees. *See supra* at 14–15.  
 8 When immigrants make the heartbreaking decision to forgo food assistance to  
 9 maintain immigration status, the effects are threefold. First, and most  
 10 immediately, more families, including those with U.S. citizen children become  
 11 hungry. *See supra* at 15–16. Second, disenrollment results in losses to economic  
 12 activity and productive output, thus harming the Plaintiff States’ economies. *See*  
 13 *supra* at 15–16. The State of Illinois, alone, estimates a loss to its economy of  
 14 \$95 to \$222 million in economic stimulus because of immigrant withdrawals  
 15 from SNAP. Hou Decl. ¶ 23. Finally, hungry children use more state resources—  
 16 educational, social services, and health care. *See supra* at 15–16.

17 Third, immigrant disenrollment in federal and state housing assistance  
 18 programs will lead to increased homelessness and a cascade of negative  
 19 outcomes, both for the affected individuals and the States. Especially in markets  
 20 where immigrants are more often employed in lower-paying jobs, housing,  
 21 without assistance, will quickly become unsustainable and more people will  
 22

1 become homeless, thereby increasing the demand on state sheltering resources  
 2 and finances. *See supra* at 16–18. Increased homelessness has immediate and  
 3 irreparable consequences for public health and has proven to have deleterious  
 4 effects on children’s lifetime outcomes. *See supra* at 16–17. Indeed, “[t]he  
 5 longterm social costs of poor health and education far outweigh the cost of  
 6 providing rental assistance.” Carey Decl. ¶ 13.

7 Overall, the Final Rule will lead to a state population which is sicker,  
 8 hungrier, and less able to contribute to the economic vitality of their communities,  
 9 all of which imposes significant costs for the Plaintiff States.

10 **D. The Balance of Equities and Public Interest Both Favor a Preliminary**  
 11 **Injunction**

12 When the government is a party, the final two *Winter* factors merge.  
 13 *Drakes Bay Oyster Co. v. Jewell*, 747 F.3d 1073, 1092 (9th Cir. 2014). “[T]he  
 14 purpose of such interim equitable relief is not to conclusively determine the rights  
 15 of the parties, but to balance the equities as the litigation moves forward.”  
 16 *Trump v. Int’l Refugee Assistance Project*, 137 S. Ct. 2080, 2087 (2017). The  
 17 principal consideration concerns the extent of the “public consequences”  
 18 attendant to the stay of the Rule. *Ramirez v. United States Immigration and*  
 19 *Customs Enf’t*, 310 F. Supp. 3d 7, 32 (D.D.C. 2018) (quoting *Winter*, 555 U.S. at  
 20 24); *see also Hernandez*, 872 F.3d at 996. Here, the balance of the equities and  
 21 public interest strongly favor a stay.  
 22

1 “There is generally no public interest in the perpetuation of unlawful  
2 agency action. To the contrary, there is a substantial public interest in having  
3 governmental agencies abide by the federal laws that govern their existence and  
4 operations.” *League of Women Voters*, 838 F.3d at 12 (citations and internal  
5 quotation marks omitted). The Rule violates the APA, and will have significant,  
6 and immediate, consequences across the country (including the Plaintiff States  
7 and their residents). It is, without doubt, in the public interest to prevent lawfully-  
8 present individuals and families with children from abandoning myriad federal  
9 and state health, education, and housing benefits to which they are entitled by  
10 law because of fear of future repercussions to their immigration status.

11 By contrast, preserving the status quo will not harm the defendants, and  
12 refraining from enforcing the Final Rule will cost them nothing. *See Diaz v.*  
13 *Brewer*, 656 F.3d 1008, 1015 (9th Cir. 2011) (court may waive Rule 65(c) bond  
14 requirement). Indeed, the Plaintiff States merely seek to keep in place regulations  
15 which have governed for the past 23 years. *See E. Bay Sanctuary Covenant v.*  
16 *Trump*, 932 F.3d 742, 778 (9th Cir. 2018) (denying the government’s motions to  
17 stay district court’s TRO, reasoning, in part, that the TRO merely “restored the  
18 law to what it had been for many years prior”).

19 Thus, the final two *Winter* factors weigh heavily in favor of the interim  
20 equitable relief sought by the Plaintiff States.  
21  
22

1 IV. CONCLUSION

2 For the all the reasons above, the Plaintiff States respectfully request that  
3 the Court stay the Rule pending a final adjudication of their claims on the merits  
4 or, in the alternative, preliminarily enjoin Defendants from enforcing or  
5 implementing the Rule.

6 RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 6th day of September, 2019.

7  
8 ROBERT W. FERGUSON  
Attorney General of Washington

9 /s/ Jeffrey T. Sprung

10 JEFFREY T. SPRUNG, WSBA #23607

Assistant Attorney General

11 RENE D. TOMISSER, WSBA #17509

Senior Counsel

12 ZACHARY P. JONES, WSBA #44557

JOSHUA WEISSMAN, WSBA #42648

13 PAUL M. CRISALLI, WSBA #40681

NATHAN K. BAYS, WSBA #43025

14 BRYAN M.S. OVENS, WSBA #32901

Assistant Attorneys General

8127 W. Klamath Court, Suite A

15 Kennewick, WA 99336

(509) 734-7285

16 Jeff.Sprung@atg.wa.gov

Rene.Tomisser@atg.wa.gov

17 Zach.Jones@atg.wa.gov

Joshua.Weissman@atg.wa.gov

18 Paul.Crisalli@atg.wa.gov

Nathan.Bays@atg.wa.gov

19 Bryan.Ovens@atg.wa.gov

20 *Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Washington*

1 MARK R. HERRING  
Attorney General of Virginia

2 /s/ Michelle S. Kallen

3 MICHELLE S. KALLEN, VSB #93286

Deputy Solicitor General

4 RYAN SPREAGUE HARDY, VSB #78558

ALICE ANNE LLOYD, VSB #79105

5 MAMOONA H. SIDDIQUI, VSB #46455

Assistant Attorneys General

6 Office of the Attorney General

202 North Ninth Street

7 Richmond, Virginia 23219

(804) 786-7240

8 MKallen@oag.state.va.us

RHardy@oag.state.va.us

9 ALloyd@oag.state.va.us

MSiddiqui@oag.state.va.us

10 SolicitorGeneral@oag.state.va.us

*Attorneys for Plaintiff Commonwealth of Virginia*

11  
12 PHIL WEISER  
Attorney General of Colorado

13 /s/ Eric R. Olson

14 ERIC R. OLSON, #36414

Solicitor General

15 Office of the Attorney General

Colorado Department of Law

16 1300 Broadway, 10th Floor

Denver, CO 80203

17 (720) 508 6548

Eric.Olson@coag.gov

18 *Attorneys for Plaintiff the State of Colorado*



1 KATHLEEN JENNINGS  
Attorney General of Delaware  
2 AARON R. GOLDSTEIN  
State Solicitor  
3 ILONA KIRSHON  
Deputy State Solicitor  
4

/s/ Monica A. Horton

5 MONICA A. HORTON, #5190  
Deputy Attorney General  
6 820 North French Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801  
7 Monica.horton@delaware.gov  
*Attorneys for Plaintiff the State of Delaware*  
8

9 KWAME RAOUL  
Attorney General State of Illinois  
10

/s/ Liza Roberson-Young

11 LIZA ROBERSON-YOUNG, #6293643  
Public Interest Counsel  
12 Office of the Illinois Attorney General  
100 West Randolph Street, 11th Floor  
13 Chicago, IL 60601  
(312) 814-5028  
14 ERobersonYoung@atg.state.il.us  
*Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Illinois*  
15

16 CLARE E. CONNORS  
Attorney General of Hawai'i  
17

/s/ Lili A. Young

18 LILI A. YOUNG, #5886  
Deputy Attorney General  
19 Department of the Attorney General  
425 Queen Street  
20 Honolulu, HI 96813  
(808) 587-3050  
21 Lili.A.Young@hawaii.gov  
*Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Hawai'i*  
22

1 BRIAN E. FROSH  
2 Attorney General of Maryland

3 /s/ Jeffrey P. Dunlap  
4 JEFFREY P. DUNLAP  
5 D. MD Bar #20846  
6 MD State Bar #1812100004  
7 Assistant Attorney General  
8 200 St. Paul Place  
9 Baltimore, MD 21202  
10 T: (410) 576-6325  
11 F: (410) 576-6955  
12 JDunlap@oag.state.md.us  
13 *Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Maryland*

9 MAURA HEALEY  
10 Attorney General of Commonwealth of Massachusetts

11 /s/ Abigail B. Taylor  
12 ABIGAIL B. TAYLOR, #670648  
13 Chief, Civil Rights Division  
14 DAVID UREÑA, #703076  
15 Special Assistant Attorney General  
16 ANGELA BROOKS, #663255  
17 Assistant Attorney General  
18 Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General  
19 One Ashburton Place  
20 Boston, MA 02108  
21 (617) 963-2232  
22 abigail.taylor@mass.gov  
david.urena@mass.gov  
angela.brooks@mass.gov  
*Attorneys for Plaintiff Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

1 DANA NESSEL  
Attorney General of Michigan

2 */s/Toni L. Harris*

3 FADWA A. HAMMOUD, #P74185

Solicitor General

4 TONI L. HARRIS, #P63111

*First Assistant Attorney General*

5 Michigan Department of Attorney General

P.O. Box 30758

6 Lansing, MI 48909

(517) 335-7603 (main)

7 HarrisT19@michigan.gov

Hammoudfl@michigan.gov

8 *Attorneys for the People of Michigan*

9 KEITH ELLISON

10 Attorney General of Minnesota

11 */s/ R.J. Detrick*

12 R.J. DETRICK, #0395336

*Assistant Attorney General*

13 Minnesota Attorney General's Office

Bremer Tower, Suite 100

14 445 Minnesota Street

St. Paul, MN 55101-2128

(651) 757-1489

15 (651) 297-7206

Rj.detrick@ag.state.mn.us

16 *Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Minnesota*

1 AARON D. FORD  
Attorney General of Nevada

2 */s/ Heidi Parry Stern*

3 HEIDI PARRY STERN, #8873  
Solicitor General  
4 Office of the Nevada Attorney General  
555 E. Washington Ave., Ste. 3900  
5 Las Vegas, NV 89101  
HStern@ag.nv.gov  
6 *Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Nevada*

7 GURBIR SINGH GREWAL  
8 Attorney General of New Jersey

9 */s/ Glenn J. Moramarco*

10 GLENN J. MORAMARCO, #030471987  
Assistant Attorney General  
Office of the Attorney General  
11 Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex  
25 Market Street, 1st Floor, West Wing  
12 Trenton, NJ 08625-0080  
(609) 376-3232  
13 Glenn.Moramarco@law.njoag.gov  
14 *Attorneys for Plaintiff State of New Jersey*

15 HECTOR BALDERAS  
Attorney General of New Mexico

16 */s/ Tania Maestas*

17 TANIA MAESTAS, #20345  
Chief Deputy Attorney General  
18 P.O. Drawer 1508  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-1508  
19 tmaestas@nmag.gov  
20 *Attorneys for Plaintiff State of New Mexico*

1 PETER F. NERONHA  
Attorney General of Rhode Island

2 /s/ Lauren E. Hill

3 LAUREN E. HILL, #9830  
4 Special Assistant Attorney General  
Office of the Attorney General  
150 South Main Street  
5 Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
(401) 274-4400 x 2038  
6 E-mail: lhill@riag.ri.gov  
*Attorneys for Plaintiff State of Rhode Island*